

Appl. No. 09/831,207
Amdt. dated March 2, 2005
Reply to Office Action of December 2, 2004

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In the Non-final Office Action mailed December 2, 2004, claims 1-54 were examined, and claims 1-33 and 36-52 were rejected, or objected to, as follows:

- Claims 36-38, 45-47, and 52 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), as allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,567,390 to Cleary ("the Cleary '390 patent").
- Claims 1-5, 11-13, 19, and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as allegedly obvious over U.S. Patent No. 5,326,537 to Cleary ("the Cleary '537 patent") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,335,492 to Zirkel.
- Claims 6-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as allegedly obvious over the Cleary '537 patent, in view of the Zirkel patent and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,814,284 to Schluter ("the Schluter patent").
- Claim 14 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as allegedly obvious over the Cleary '537 patent in view of the Zirkel patent, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,143,700 ("the Anguil patent").
- Claims 21-27, 32, and 33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as allegedly obvious over the Cleary '537 patent in view of the Schluter patent.
- Claims 28-30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as allegedly obvious over the Cleary '537 patent in view of the Schluter patent, and further in view of the Anguil patent.
- Claims 39, 40, and 48 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as allegedly obvious over the Cleary '390 patent in view of the Schluter patent.

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- Claims 41 and 49 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as allegedly obvious over the Cleary '390 patent in view of the Anguil patent.
- Claims 15-18, 31, 42-44, 50, and 51 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim.

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the allowability of claims 34, 35, 53 and 54. Applicants also acknowledge with appreciation the allowability of claims 15-18, 31, 42-44, 50, and 51 if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicants have canceled rejected claims 1, 14, 21, 28, 29, 36, 41, 46, and 49, and thus, the Examiner's rejections of those claims are moot. Also, Applicants have rewritten claim 15 in independent form including all of the limitations of its base claim, independent claim 1, and intervening claim 14. Applicants also have amended claims 2-4, 6, 11, 19, and 20 to be dependent upon amended independent claim 15. In addition, Applicants have rewritten claim 31 in independent form including all of the limitations of its base claim, independent claim 21, and intervening claims 28 and 29. Applicants also have amended claims 22-24, 26, 27, 30, 32, and 33 to be dependent upon amended independent claim 31.

Furthermore, Applicants have rewritten claim 42 in independent form including all of the limitations of its base claim, independent claim 36, and intervening claim 41. Applicants also have amended claims 37-39, 43, 44, and 45 to be dependent upon amended independent claim 42. In addition, Applicants have rewritten claim 50 in independent form including all of the limitations of its base claim, independent claim 46, and intervening claim 49. Applicants also have amended claims 47, 48, 51, and 52 to be dependent upon amended independent claim 50. No new matter has been added.

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Accordingly, Applicants believe amended independent claims 15, 31, 42, and 50, and dependent claims 2-13, 16-20, 22-27, 30, 32, 33, 37-40, 43-45, 47, 48, 51, and 52, to be allowable. Therefore, Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections of, or request removal of the objection to, claims 2-13, 15-20, 22-27, 30-33, 37-40, 42-45, 47, 48, and 50-52.

Correction of Filing Receipt

On April 22, 2004, Applicants submitted a Request for Correction of Filing Receipt ("the Request") for filing with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (please see the enclosed copies of the Request, the transmittal document that accompanied the Request, the facsimile confirmation associated with the submission of the Request, and the Auto-Reply Facsimile Transmission from the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office associated with the Request). Even though it appears that the Request was received by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, receipt of the Request is not documented in the Patent Application Information Retrieval ("PAIR") System, and the typographical error in the name of the first inventor is still evident on the cover page of the Office Action. Applicants respectfully request that the spelling of the first inventor's name be updated as noted in the enclosed copy of the Request.

Conclusion

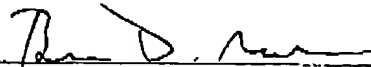
This application should now be in condition for a favorable action. Applicants respectfully request entry of the Amendment and an early allowance of all claims herein. If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorney at the below telephone number to discuss the steps necessary for

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placing the application in condition for allowance. If there are any fees due in connection with the filing of this amendment, please charge the fees to our Deposit Account No. 19-1853.

Respectfully submitted,
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Enclosures